
of private and public schools.

WHAT NEXT?

A survey of history will show that nowhere has educational revolution preceded social revolution. Changes in the education system will happen only when the socio-political climate is congenial to change. Our objective therefore boils down to bring about a radical change in the political system. Political parties have evinced little interest in CSS-NS. People, though aware of the need for quality education, are not prepared to fight for free quality education through Government schools. Their eagerness to get their children into private schools taking advantage of 25% reservation shows they are not eager to send their children to government schools. We have to build a powerful movement to convince the common people that their children are entitled to free quality education and they have to force the government to upgrade their schools and ensure good education. CSS-NS should turn out to be a mass programme. It is possible and we will make it possible.

MOBILISATION OF PEOPLE AND RESOURCES

All these call for activating the masses in favour of CSS-NS. AIFRTE can at best provide a theoretical support, but

mobilization of the masses has to be undertaken on a large scale. In this, students, teachers, trade unions and like-minded persons and organisations are to be used to send the message. Street plays, dramas, public meetings, press conferences etc., are some of the means to reach the people at large. AIFRTE's perspective statement should be translated into all regional languages. Posters should also be printed in all languages. Not only publicity but the spirit of the masses should be aroused so that CSS-NS becomes a universal demand of the people. AIFRTE cannot undertake this mission all by itself. Its member organizations should be assigned the job. In whatever State AIFRTE has no affiliated unit, we have to find one. In Tamilnadu, the demand for Uniform Equitable Quality Education was conceded by the Government only when it turned out to be a mass movement and student wings courted arrest and faced police brutality. Unless CSS-NS turns out to be a mass demand, it would just be a utopian dream.

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Pseudo Educationists and Edpreneurs

One important argument advanced in favour of the formation of a state, scholars confer is to provide indivisible public services like Education and health to the citizens. They are called as merit wants that can be provided by an institution that stands for sovereign political power. The World Bank economists have used their intellect to distinguish between public goods and private goods even in education. They have called only school education as a public good and higher education as private good as it provides benefits to the individual and not to the public (even if one becomes a Nobel laureate we should not claim him or her as a citizen of a country). Even this distinction did not save school education in India is a different matter. Those who are familiar with the American higher education know that around 65 percent of the students are provided with free education through scholarships. The private universities survive with the munificent endowments and the research projects that the distinguished alumni get from private sector. However, they are very few. The situation in

the higher education of the advanced countries varies from country to country. Now the Indian government is seeking ideas and recommendations from concerned citizens, business groups etc as to how to expand higher education to meet the growing needs of an economy.

Indian higher education of the modern variety was introduced by the British to meet their requirements and to help create an elite class that helped them to survive and would run the state once they leave. There are several issues in this statement, but we concentrate on the current discussion on a report given by a group of business-cum-educationists recently in Delhi on private participation in higher education. The committee on "Corporate participation in Higher Education" constituted by MHRD under the chairmanship of Mr. Narayana Murthy presented the report to the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, in New Delhi on May 08, 2012.

It is reported that the committee wanted land free of

cost (wanted on lease for 999 years like the Mulla Periyar dam) from the government and a 300 percent deduction from taxable income. The wish list continues; a 10 year multiple entry visa for foreign students, a national loan fund of Rs 1 lakh crores, no space index for institutions in urban areas to start campuses (like one room universities) and the Prime Minister should personally write to the business houses to take part in higher education. We could not access the detailed report and could pick up few points from the media reports. It appears that neither the Professors nor the civil society organizations have voiced their views on this important issue that would impact the future generations and the country.

Some of the experts who have given the recommendation are being considered by a section of the media as great Intellectuals and Educationists who brought a turnaround in the system. While the critiques and a few educationists consider them as body shoppers with naked craving for money and success. It is also alleged that some of these self styled educationists brought disaster to the system as they were responsible in influencing the whole system to concentrate on the production of men-machines or so called software personnel to meet the lower level skill requirements of USA and other advanced countries in their transition from manufacturing economies to service providers. It is difficult to evaluate the ultimate result from this transformation is a gain or drain; the country lost the best brains of few generations due to the private interests and profits of the few. We all know how the Engineering colleges in the country particularly in the South where English medium helped the boys and girls to access the job market of English speaking advanced countries flooded with BCA, MCA and such related degrees. Those who could not get in to it used the informal sector to get the tag soft ware engineer certification even without a degree and left formal education in the mad rush for jobs in the 1990s and 2000s. The froth is gone now. There is some kind of homogeneity and a guarantee of minimum salary structure comparable to some central government jobs now in the soft ware sector for a select few. The repugnance for these courses is reflected in the closure of several colleges in the South. Can a developing country with less than 15 percent enrolment in higher education and a dropout rate of around 70 percent at school stage afford this?

The collegiate education or higher education in the country was initiated through the Grant-in-aid system of

the East India Company that promoted philanthropic organizations including private charities to establish educational institutions. If we look at the history of these institutions, we realize that those who have occupied important positions in India and abroad in the past and being flaunted now as educationists were the beneficiaries of this phenomenon. We must pay our respect and gratitude to these institutes that have invested their resources without expecting anything in return. Some of them are still surviving along with the religious charities that have a different mandate, but have contributed for the development of education in the private sector. The funding agencies like UGC, AICTE, state departments of education etc have been providing grants to maintain these institutions that are generally declared as nonprofit organizations. But, majority of these institutions that came in the boom period with the support of political and business interests have made money out of the social demand for a certain category of education. Some of these institutions have flouted norms and put all kinds of pressure on the regulatory authorities to get their licenses to operate renewed. As a result, some of the regulators are in jail and several professors are going round the CBI, CVC etc for their extraordinary service rendered to higher education. Majority of these characters are involved in the operations as educationists and are being unmasked as pseudo Educationists. Amusingly, some of the professors who never taught in a school are producing text books for school children (not the school teachers) that create ripples in Parliament.

The land grant scheme to develop university education in the USA is different as there is a built-in character of charity in some of the well established private universities. They have shown results and produced Nobel laureates and transformed the economy. But, none of the entrepreneurs of education in India who can be called as Edpreneurs (including the experts of the Report) did not spell out the benefit to the society at large, if public resources are provided to the Edpreneur. If agreed, how it is possible to reconcile this with the arguments of the World Bank that higher education is a private good?

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